

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

JOINT COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

2019 Interims

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Final Report of

JOINT COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

The Joint Committee on Health was appointed by the Joint Committee on Government and Finance, following the 2018 Regular Session of the 83rd Legislature.

The Committee **REPORTS** as follows:

ASSIGNED STUDY TOPICS

After the passage of House Bill 2010 - Relating to foster care in the previous legislative session, further research and study was required. The Joint Committee on Health focused on these issues for the entirety of the interim session.

INTERIM MEETINGS

July 22, 2019

The Department of Health and Human Resources provided an update on the Department of Justice settlement regarding placement of children in residential treatment facilities. The update was provided by Cammie Chapman, Associate General Counsel for the Department of Health and Human Resources. As required by HB2010, an update on the transition of foster care population to a managed care medical system was given by Jeremiah Samples, Deputy Secretary. An update on implementation of the Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED) Waiver was given by Cindy Beane. The SED waiver's primary goal is to support children with severe emotional disturbances by helping to keep them with their families, in the home and with a support network while receiving the services they need to improve their outcomes.

An update on the implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Act was provided by Laura Barno. West Virginia is prepared to start the program when it becomes effective. Family First Prevention Services Act reforms the federal child welfare financing streams, Title IV-E and Title IV-B of the Social Security Act, to provide services to families who are at risk of entering the child welfare system. The bill aims to prevent children from entering foster care by allowing federal reimbursement for mental health services, substance use treatment, and in-home parenting skill training. It also seeks to improve the well-being of children already in foster by incentivizing states to reduce placement of children in congregate care.

CHAMPS policy goals were discussed. CHAMPS is a national campaign to ensure bright futures for kids in foster care by promoting the highest quality parenting. CHAMPS

promotes policies that encourage and support quality foster parenting so more children will be safe and healthy, experience greater academic success, build healthy relationships, and leave foster care to join permanent families. The playbook showcases research-based policy recommendations and examples that aim to inform and inspire ongoing state and tribal efforts to improve the lives of children in foster care. The playbook is organized around the CHAMPS six priority policy goals. The six policy goals include: Support relationships between birth and foster families; Implement data-driven recruitment and retention practices; Engage foster parents in decision making; Provide timely access to trusted, dedicated staff and peer support to foster parents; Prioritize placements with family members and other family connections; and Ensure timely access to physical and mental health services.

Finally, presentations were given by Stacy Dei, Marshall County, Family Resources Network and Diane Hughes, Upper Kanawha Valley Starting Points Family Resource Network the importance of Family Resource Networks and their role in the foster care system.

September 23, 2019

Marissa Sanders, Director, WV Foster Adoptive & Kinship Parents Network discussed West Virginia Foster Adoptive and Kinship survey. The survey will try to ascertain the shortcomings of the current system and the results will be used to develop legislation. Kent Nowviskie, Assistant to the Deputy Secretary, DHHR, discussed child welfare staffing and child welfare staff recruitment and retention strategic planning. Amy Kennedy-Rickman, State Director for West Virginia NECCO, discussed recruitment initiatives, retention initiatives, leveling payments and adoption reimbursement initiatives. Marilyn Pearce, Children's Home Society, discussed specialty child placement and the Achievement Center of Texas. Vickie James, Executive Director, WV Board of Social Workers, discussed licensure requirements, reciprocity requirements, and national certifications.

November 18, 2019

The West Virginia Board of Examiners in Counseling, Cheryl Henry, Executive Director, Guy Gage, Chairman, and Lori Ellison discussed licensure requirements, reciprocity requirements and national certification. Linda Watts, Commissioner, Bureau for Children and Families, West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, reported on kinship care. Melanie Oakhurst, Department of Health and Human Resources, spoke about adoption of foster children, time frames and the closing the file process before an adoption may occur. Jolynn Marra, Interim Inspector General, introduced Pamela M. Woodman-Kaehler West Virginia's first Foster Care Ombudsman.

December 16, 2019

Marissa Sanders, Director, WV Foster Adoptive & Kinship Parents Network, discussed a sample of West Virginia Foster Adoptive and Kinship survey results. AETNA Better Health of West Virginia, CEO, Todd White, CMO, Dr. Don Gibbon and Product Strategy Senior Manager Aetna Medicaid, Josh Boynton answered questions about converting the foster care health system to a managed care system. Justice Tim Armstead, Judge Allan Moats, Judge Carter Williams and Cindy Largent-Hill spoke about multi-disciplinary teams, guardian ad litem and adoption. The Joint Committee members received reports from the Coalition for Diabetes Management, the Coalition for Palliative Care and the Coalition for Responsible Chronic Pain Management.

The Committee **RECOMMENDS** that the following legislation be adopted:

- Creating a bill of rights for foster parents and foster children to be administered by the foster care ombudsman;
- Strengthen the Office of the Foster Care Ombudsman by providing additional resources and authority;
- Update adoption procedures and timeframes;
- Restructure the child protective service worker classification and increase the salary base.

Copies of all proposed legislation recommended for passage during the 2020 Regular Session of the Legislature are attached to this report.

Respectfully submitted:

Senator Michael Maroney
Co-Chair

Delegate Jordan Hill
Co-Chair